

tion concerns a different leech, that very disagreeable denizen of upland regions throughout India from the Himalayas to Ceylon that is so common in the rains.

KARACHI,

18th November 1922.

F. WALL,

COLONEL, I.M.S.

No. XXXV.—COBRA GOING DOWN A HOLE TAIL FOREMOST.

A few days ago I was walking along a path with the Maharaj Kumar of Cutch when we saw a cobra a few feet in front of us. Directly it saw us it made for a hole close by and went down *tail first*. It may not be unusual but I have never seen a snake go down a hole with its reverse gear in and I was glad to have a reliable witness with me. It recalls the action of the cobra in "As wise as a serpent" in the Lays of Ind. Probably Aliph Cheem had never seen a cobra act as described in his Bath-room Epic but it certainly made an amusing story.

BHUJ, CUTCH,

8th September 1922.

E. O. BRIEN,

LT.-COLONEL.

No. XXXVI.—NOTES ON A LARGE MONITOR (*VARANUS SP.*)
IN GHAZIPUR.

While out looking for nests this morning in some long grass, my wire-haired terrier began to bark furiously, and on going to investigate I found that he had a large Iguana lizard at bay. The dog was running round in circles trying to grab the reptile by the back of the throat but the latter kept turning too and presenting its hind quarters to the dog with its tail drawn round at almost a right angle to its body. Every time the dog got too close the tail would slash round and strike the dog a resounding blow. This battle raged for about ten minutes, and each time the dog was hit and drew back the reptile would get a couple of feet nearer a hole in a bank into which it finally disappeared. While the reptile fought it gave vent to loud hisses which seemed to be caused by the inflation of a sort of bag under the throat.

I believe that these lizards are harmless, but the local natives believe that a slash from the tail causes sores of a virulent type, which may sometimes prove fatal. Is there any foundation for this belief? Certainly the reptile did not seem to be very perturbed when attacked by the dog, and seemed to have ample confidence in his method of defence.

I have seen these reptiles rob nests on several occasions, especially nests on, and in the vicinity of water; and on one occasion saw one raid a squirrel's nest with four young. After raiding the nest it disappeared into a hole in a tree trunk carrying two of the young in its mouth, and one in each hind claw, followed behind by both the parents making a dreadful noise.

They are also expert swimmers, and I have watched them fishing on several occasions. They emulate otters by catching fish beneath the surface, and then coming out on land to devour it.

GHAZIPUR, U.P.,

11th September 1922.

E. H. GILL.

[Though generally believed to be poisonous the Monitors (*Varanidæ*) are harmless reptiles. There are no poisonous Lizards known from India. The only poisonous Lizard known to science is the American Holoderm.—EDITORS.]